

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 262

Let me perceive no differences today.

Sarah's Commentary:

When I was in Sedona studying and practicing the Course, I attended a workshop given by Nicola Perry called, "My Journey as a Course-Based Healer." At her workshop, she told the story of how she came to be a spiritual healer. She described the events of her life that led her to become a healer and then described what happens in her mind when she offers healing to others.

The significant thing she discovered was that she had to dismiss someone's bodily identity in her mind when she joined in a healing session. She had to get beyond differences such as male, female, likes, dislikes, interests—anything about their identities as bodies or personalities. Every single bit of normal perception about who someone was had to be released for her to come to the place where she overlooked all differences. Her intent was to see the person as a Son of God, their true Self, their true nature, and their formless spirit. It was something not forced but just happened. She cautioned that it cannot be imposed by trying to mentally create such a picture and superimpose it on the person while shoving all the usual perceptions to the back of the mind. The first step she took in this process was to relax, become aware of the perceptions she was holding, ask for help in letting them go, and reaffirm the true nature as the same One Self. ***"Why should I give this one a thousand names, when only one suffices? For Your Son must bear Your name, for You created him."*** (W.262.1.5-6)

No one is a stranger. Everyone is part of me and I of them. To recognize this is to know the truth about ourselves. It is only in recognizing our sameness and that we share the same interests that we can know peace. Peace can only be found in unity, never in differences. We spend so much of our time comparing and measuring ourselves against others. We see ourselves better than or less than others based on our judgments of them and of ourselves. Differences and comparisons constitute our special relationships, whether they be differences based on special love or special hate. We see someone who has what we don't have and what we think we need. In the special relationship, our goal is to try to get from the other what we think will fill our perceived lacks. Our perception of differences is a way to see the other as sinful so we can see ourselves as innocent. And what is their perceived sin? It is the belief that they have stolen from us what is rightfully ours and now they owe us. If they don't give us what we consider is ours, we hate them for it.

Every relationship, whether of hate or seeming love, is a special relationship. It is by definition one of differences. The ego uses these relationships to project guilt on others. Fundamental to all of our special relationships is seeing each one as a body and not who they really are. ***Such is the strange position in which those in a world inhabited by bodies seem to be. Each body seems to house a separate mind, a disconnected thought, living alone and in no way joined to the Thought by which it was created. Each tiny fragment seems to be self-contained, needing another for some things, but by no means totally dependent on***

its one Creator for everything; needing the whole to give it any meaning, for by itself it does mean nothing. Nor has it any life apart and by itself." (T.18.VIII.5.1-4) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.75)

The focus of this Lesson is on our unity. The recognition of shared interests is a condition of the Teacher of God as stated in the Manual for Teachers. It is to recognize that there is only one Son. **"A teacher of God is anyone who chooses to be one. His qualifications consist solely in this; somehow, somewhere he has made a deliberate choice in which he did not see his interests as apart from someone else's. Once he has done that, his road is established and his direction is sure. A light has entered the darkness. It may be a single light, but that is enough. He has entered an agreement with God even if he does not yet believe in Him. He has become a bringer of salvation. He has become a teacher of God."** (M.1.1.1-8)

Clearly, our eyes show us that there are many different people, yet today, we are reminded we all share the same Christ Self and are One with God. Differences are only apparent in the illusion and reinforced by our senses. Now we are called to use every situation as an opportunity to see beyond differences and recognize we share the same purpose and the same goal. The purpose of every relationship is for healing of the mind. We do this by taking responsibility for our judgments and being willing to release them. Beyond these judgments is the truth, waiting to be acknowledged.

Although we continue to see differences, today we make a decision to watch our judgments and take responsibility for them, joining with Jesus and asking for his help to see our brothers as innocent. The body is all about reinforcing our seeming separate state and maintaining differences between us, but the body can be turned to a holy purpose. We can choose to put the body to the purpose of healing. We can choose how we use the body. It can be used for pleasure, for attack, for getting what we think we want, or for extending love and forgiveness, thus being an agent of the Holy Spirit. What the body is used for is simply a matter of choice. The choice is ours. Peace is found in joining with our brothers and recognizing we share the same purpose. **"You cannot enter into real relationships with any of God's Sons unless you love them all and equally. Love is not special."** (T.13.X.11.1-2) (ACIM OE T.13.IV.30)

I had a situation recently where I made a judgment about the behavior of someone whom I felt was acting in a way that was self-serving and selfish, looking after her own needs in a way I thought was at the expense of others. In the process, I felt she was less than honest and forthright. I asked myself if these were aspects I could see in myself? I had to look at my own self-serving and selfish behavior that I preferred to see in her. I took responsibility for my self-attacks, without judging myself for them. I was willing to just look at them which is what we are all called to do when we judge anyone. We do make judgments but the only question is whether we are willing to see our projections and to release them?

The ego does not want us to look. The principle behind any defense is not to look because to look at our ego without judging ourselves is the way it is undone. The miracle **"merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false."** (W.PII.Q13.1.3) The same thing is said about forgiveness. **"It merely looks, and waits, and judges not."** (W.PII.Q1.4.3) Healing is in the willingness to look without judgment. My judgment was a projection in which I preferred to see the sin in her that I feared was mine. What this allowed me to do is to claim my innocence at her expense. My attack thoughts convinced me that she was the problem. We do this so we don't have to look at our own self-hatred. The only reason I am affected at all by her, or anyone, is that I forget it is my dream that I am dreaming. As I released my misguided perceptions

to the Holy Spirit, I was able to have a lovely, open connection with her and recognize we are both innocent.

The truth about everyone is that they are innocent, no matter what the body seems to be doing. When we can accept that it is truly all a dream, we can see more clearly that everyone who shows up in our dream is playing the role we assigned to them for our own healing. There are no accidents in salvation. Whatever we need to experience in order to heal, we do experience through the part others play in our drama. It can all seem so unfair but that is only when we forget it is our own dream.

Yes, we still do react to events in the dream as if they were real, and we have feelings and reactions to these events that seem to come from outside our own minds. Thus, we like some events and feel good about them, and dislike others and feel very sad, hurt and unfairly treated. We see ourselves as the effect of the world and believe it is the world dreaming us, instead of our own dream. When we recognize it is all our own dream, we can see that it all comes from our own minds. Mind is the cause and the world is the effect. Thus, we have power over what seems to be happening to us. **"For you would not react at all to figures in a dream you knew that you were dreaming. Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream."** (T.27.VIII.10.5) (ACIM OE T.27. IX.86)

It is true that some of what I see another doing may not be what I have done in form. My actions may not be the same, but my thoughts are the same. I have not murdered anyone, yet I have the same murderous thoughts. I may not be poor, but I hold thoughts of lack, self-protection, self-centeredness, and greed. I may not be addicted to alcohol or drugs, but I have other addictions. We share the same one ego mind, which contains all our misperceptions of what we are. We project our thoughts onto others to be rid of them in ourselves. Of course, this does not work, because by projecting on others, we keep what the ego tells us we are giving away. Until we can see that this is the case, we continue to project our guilt in the false belief that we are getting rid of it in ourselves. We do it because we still value separation. While we attempt to distance ourselves from our thoughts, they are never disowned. All they do is keep the guilt in the mind intact.

Attack and judgment can only come with belief in differences and separation. Without this belief, any attack we seem to make on another would be recognized as just an attack on ourselves. Why would I attack a part of myself? Today, we are called to watch our judgments and when differences arise, be willing to forgive them. We affirm the truth today: This is my brother, who is a part of me and whom I love, as I love myself. Affirmations will never overcome the ego, but they remind us of the truth. If we are not experiencing this as true for us, we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us see our brother as He sees him. If God loves my brother and I judge him instead, I am proclaiming that I am separate from my brother, and my will is different from God's.

Today, we remind ourselves that our desire is to see in everyone as our dearest friend. We actively watch for the judgments we make that contravene this thought and are willing to be wrong about the way we are seeing him. This is how we do our part as an invitation to the Holy Spirit to bring this experience into reality for us, so we can truly know there are no differences. Until the experience is there, effort and discipline are required. It may seem like the discipline and the consistent practice required is difficult and that progress is not being made, but there will come a moment where a shift in the mind is made where we receive the peace and understanding delivered through our practicing. Recently, a friend described this as her "Helen Keller moment."

Helen Keller was blind and deaf and unable to communicate. Her teacher was teaching her to sign, and Helen was good at repeating what she was taught because she was very bright. However, there was no real understanding until the moment when all of a sudden she made the association with the sign for water and the actual feel of the water. Then, everything clicked for her and she became very excited. It is the same for us when we do this work. It may not click for a long time as we do our practice until suddenly there is a deep insight, and we get it. This may happen again and again and is very powerful in the moment of realization. So, keep up with the practice and know that this moment is available when the mind is ready. Readyng the mind requires willingness, vigilance, and determination to practice in watching our thoughts and doing the forgiveness work.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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